

wherein a pair of first and second stitching yarns is positioned between each adjacent pair of top cross machine direction yarns, said first and second stitching yarns of each pair being interwoven with said top and bottom machine direction yarns
15 such that, as a fiber support portion of said first stitching yarn is interweaving with said top machine direction yarns, a binding portion of said second stitching yarn is positioned below said top machine direction yarns, and such that as a fiber support portion of said second stitching yarn is interweaving with said top machine direction yarns, a binding portion of said first stitching yarn is positioned below said top
20 machine direction yarns, and such that said first and second stitching yarns cross each other as they pass below a transitional top machine direction yarn, and such that each of said binding portions of said first and second stitching yarns passes below at least one of said bottom machine direction yarns;

wherein each of said top cross machine direction yarns passes over a first
25 group of alternate top machine direction yarns and under a second group of alternate top machine direction yarns, with each of said yarns of said first group being positioned between a pair of yarns of said second group, and with each of said yarns of said second group being positioned between a pair of yarns of said first group, and wherein said fiber support portions of said first and second stitching yarns pass under
30 said first set of alternate top machine direction yarns and over said second set of alternate top machine direction yarns, such that said top machine direction yarns, said top cross machine direction yarns, and said fiber support portions of said first and second stitching yarns form a plain weave pattern;

wherein said fiber support portions of said first stitching yarns pass over a first
35 number of said machine direction yarns, said fiber support portions of said second stitching yarns pass over a second number of said machine direction yarns, and said first number differs from said second number.

Please cancel Claim 4.

7.4 (amended) The papermaker's fabric defined in Claim [1] ~~2~~, wherein
said first and second stitching yarns are of a smaller diameter than said top machine
direction yarns.

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8. (amended) [The papermaker's fabric defined in Claim 1,] A
papermaker's fabric, comprising top machine direction yarns, top cross machine
direction yarns, bottom machine direction yarns, bottom cross machine direction
yarns, and sets of first and second stitching yarns, said fabric being formed in a
5 plurality of repeating units, each of said repeating units comprising:
 a set of top machine direction yarns;
 a set of top cross machine direction yarns interwoven with said set of top
 machine direction yarns;
 a set of bottom machine direction yarns;
10 a set of bottom cross machine direction yarns interwoven with said set of
 bottom machine direction yarns;
 wherein a pair of first and second stitching yarns is positioned between each
 adjacent pair of top cross machine direction yarns, said first and second stitching
 yarns of each pair being interwoven with said top and bottom machine direction yarns
15 such that, as a fiber support portion of said first stitching yarn is interweaving with
 said top machine direction yarns, a binding portion of said second stitching yarn is
 positioned below said top machine direction yarns, and such that as a fiber support
 portion of said second stitching yarn is interweaving with said top machine direction
 yarns, a binding portion of said first stitching yarn is positioned below said top
20 machine direction yarns, and such that said first and second stitching yarns cross each
 other as they pass below a transitional top machine direction yarn, and such that each
 of said binding portions of said first and second stitching yarns passes below at least
 one of said bottom machine direction yarns;
 wherein each of said binding portions of said first and second stitching yarns
25 passes beneath only one of said bottom machine direction yarns.

8. (amended) [The papermaker's fabric defined in Claim 1,] A
papermaker's fabric, comprising top machine direction yarns, top cross machine
direction yarns, bottom machine direction yarns, bottom cross machine direction
yarns, and sets of first and second stitching yarns, said fabric being formed in a
5 plurality of repeating units, each of said repeating units comprising:
 a set of top machine direction yarns;

a set of top cross machine direction yarns interwoven with said set of top machine direction yarns;

a set of bottom machine direction yarns;

10 a set of bottom cross machine direction yarns interwoven with said set of bottom machine direction yarns;

wherein a pair of first and second stitching yarns is positioned between each adjacent pair of top cross machine direction yarns, said first and second stitching yarns of each pair being interwoven with said top and bottom machine direction yarns

15 such that, as a fiber support portion of said first stitching yarn is interweaving with said top machine direction yarns, a binding portion of said second stitching yarn is positioned below said top machine direction yarns, and such that as a fiber support portion of said second stitching yarn is interweaving with said top machine direction yarns, a binding portion of said first stitching yarn is positioned below said top

20 machine direction yarns, and such that said first and second stitching yarns cross each other as they pass below a transitional top machine direction yarn, and such that each of said binding portions of said first and second stitching yarns passes below at least one of said bottom machine direction yarns;

25 wherein said repeat unit includes 10 top machine direction yarns and 10 bottom machine direction yarns.

Please cancel Claim 10.

11.7 (amended) [The papermaker's fabric defined in Claim 1,] A
papermaker's fabric, comprising top machine direction yarns, top cross machine direction yarns, bottom machine direction yarns, bottom cross machine direction yarns, and sets of first and second stitching yarns, said fabric being formed in a plurality of repeating units, each of said repeating units comprising:

a set of top machine direction yarns;

a set of top cross machine direction yarns interwoven with said set of top machine direction yarns;

a set of bottom machine direction yarns;

10 a set of bottom cross machine direction yarns interwoven with said set of
bottom machine direction yarns;

wherein a pair of first and second stitching yarns is positioned between each
adjacent pair of top cross machine direction yarns, said first and second stitching
yarns of each pair being interwoven with said top and bottom machine direction yarns

15 such that, as a fiber support portion of said first stitching yarn is interweaving with
said top machine direction yarns, a binding portion of said second stitching yarn is
positioned below said top machine direction yarns, and such that as a fiber support
portion of said second stitching yarn is interweaving with said top machine direction
yarns, a binding portion of said first stitching yarn is positioned below said top
20 machine direction yarns, and such that said first and second stitching yarns cross each
other as they pass below a transitional top machine direction yarn, and such that each
of said binding portions of said first and second stitching yarns passes below at least
one of said bottom machine direction yarns;

25 wherein said top machine direction yarns and said top cross machine direction
yarns are interwoven in a repeating pattern such that each of said top cross machine
direction yarns passes over a first pair of adjacent top machine direction yarns, under
a third top machine direction yarn adjacent to said first pair, and over a second pair of
top machine direction yarns positioned adjacent said third top machine direction yarn,
and wherein adjacent top cross machine direction yarns pass over top machine
30 direction yarn pairs that are offset by two top machine direction yarns[,];

35 [and] wherein said stitching yarns are interwoven with said top machine
direction yarns in a repeating pattern such that said fiber support portion of each of
said first and second stitching yarns passes over a third pair of adjacent top machine
direction yarns, under an adjacent top machine direction yarn, and over a fourth pair
of adjacent machine direction yarns, then passes under said transitional top machine
direction yarn, said third and fourth pairs of top machine direction yarns being offset
from said first and second pairs by one machine direction yarn, such that said top
machine direction yarns, said cross machine direction yarns, and said fiber support
portions of said first and second stitching yarns form a 1x2 twill pattern.

12.8 (amended) [The papermaker's fabric defined in Claim 1,] A papermaker's fabric, comprising top machine direction yarns, top cross machine direction yarns, bottom machine direction yarns, bottom cross machine direction yarns, and sets of first and second stitching yarns, said fabric being formed in a plurality of repeating units, each of said repeating units comprising:

a set of top machine direction yarns;

a set of top cross machine direction yarns interwoven with said set of top machine direction yarns;

a set of bottom machine direction yarns;

10 a set of bottom cross machine direction yarns interwoven with said set of bottom machine direction yarns;

wherein a pair of first and second stitching yarns is positioned between each adjacent pair of top cross machine direction yarns, said first and second stitching yarns of each pair being interwoven with said top and bottom machine direction yarns such that, as a fiber support portion of said first stitching yarn is interweaving with said top machine direction yarns, a binding portion of said second stitching yarn is positioned below said top machine direction yarns, and such that as a fiber support portion of said second stitching yarn is interweaving with said top machine direction yarns, a binding portion of said first stitching yarn is positioned below said top

20 machine direction yarns, and such that said first and second stitching yarns cross each other as they pass below a transitional top machine direction yarn, and such that each of said binding portions of said first and second stitching yarns passes below at least one of said bottom machine direction yarns;

25 wherein said stitching yarns are interwoven with said top and bottom machine direction yarns such that adjacent pairs of stitching yarns cross beneath transitional top machine direction yarns that are offset by two top machine direction yarns.

Please cancel Claims 14 and 15.

16.10 (amended) [The papermaker's fabric defined in Claim 15,] A papermaker's fabric, comprising top machine direction yarns, top cross machine direction yarns, bottom machine direction yarns, bottom cross machine direction

yarns, and sets of first and second stitching yarns, said fabric being formed in a
5 plurality of repeating units, each of said repeating units comprising:

a set of top machine direction yarns;

a set of top cross machine direction yarns interwoven with said set of top
machine direction yarns;

a set of bottom machine direction yarns;

10 a set of bottom cross machine direction yarns interwoven with said set of
bottom machine direction yarns;

wherein pairs of first and second stitching yarns are positioned between pairs
of top cross machine direction yarns, said first and second stitching yarns of each pair
being interwoven with said top and bottom machine direction yarns such that, as a
15 fiber support portion of said first stitching yarn is interweaving with said top machine
direction yarns, a binding portion of said second stitching yarn is positioned below
said top machine direction yarns, and such that as a fiber support portion of said
second stitching yarn is interweaving with said top machine direction yarns, a binding
portion of said first stitching yarn is positioned below said top machine direction

20 yarns, and such that said first and second stitching yarns cross each other as they pass
below a transitional top machine direction yarn, and such that each of said binding
portions of said first and second stitching yarns passes below at least one of said
bottom machine direction yarns, and wherein between 25 and 50 percent of adjacent
pairs of first and second stitching yarns are interwoven as reversed picks;

25 wherein each of said top cross machine direction yarns passes over a first
group of alternate top machine direction yarns and under a second group of alternate
top machine direction yarns, with each of said yarns of said first group being
positioned between a pair of yarns of said second group, and with each of said yarns
of said second group being positioned between a pair of yarns of said first group, and

30 wherein a pair of first and second stitching yarns is positioned between each pair of
top cross machine direction yarns, and wherein said fiber support portions of said first
and second stitching yarns pass under said first set of alternate top machine direction
yarns and over said second set of alternate top machine direction yarns, such that said
top machine direction yarns, said top cross machine direction yarns, and said fiber
35 support portions of said first and second stitching yarns form a plain weave pattern;

wherein said fiber support portions of said first stitching yarns pass over a first number of said machine direction yarns, said fiber support portions of said second stitching yarns pass over a second number of said machine direction yarns, and said first number differs from said second number.

Please cancel Claims 17, 20 and 21.

22/3 (amended) [The papermaker's fabric defined in Claim 14,] A papermaker's fabric, comprising top machine direction yarns, top cross machine direction yarns, bottom machine direction yarns, bottom cross machine direction yarns, and sets of first and second stitching yarns, said fabric being formed in a plurality of repeating units, each of said repeating units comprising:

5 a set of top machine direction yarns;
 a set of top cross machine direction yarns interwoven with said set of top machine direction yarns;
 a set of bottom machine direction yarns;
 a set of bottom cross machine direction yarns interwoven with said set of bottom machine direction yarns;
 wherein pairs of first and second stitching yarns are positioned between pairs of top cross machine direction yarns, said first and second stitching yarns of each pair being interwoven with said top and bottom machine direction yarns such that, as a
10 fiber support portion of said first stitching yarn is interweaving with said top machine direction yarns, a binding portion of said second stitching yarn is positioned below said top machine direction yarns, and such that as a fiber support portion of said second stitching yarn is interweaving with said top machine direction yarns, a binding portion of said first stitching yarn is positioned below said top machine direction
15 yarns, and such that said first and second stitching yarns cross each other as they pass below a transitional top machine direction yarn, and such that each of said binding portions of said first and second stitching yarns passes below at least one of said bottom machine direction yarns, and wherein between 25 and 50 percent of adjacent pairs of first and second stitching yarns are interwoven as reversed picks;